

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 30 MARCH 2006

BELLSBANK WOMEN'S PROJECT GRANT FUNDING 2006/07

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Policy and Resources Committee of the outcome of the annual evaluation of Bellsbank Women's Project supported through a Service Level Agreement and to confirm funding arrangements for 2006/2007.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1.** Bellsbank Women's Project was established as an Urban Aid Project in 1983 with the aim 'to provide educational opportunities for women living in the communities of Bellsbank and surrounding areas that will enable them to develop and realise their full potential as individuals, parents and active citizens'.
- 2.2.** At the end of the Urban Aid funding, the project received annual funding from Strathclyde Regional Council and from 1996, East Ayrshire Council. In 1999 East Ayrshire Council developed and established a Service Level Agreement with the Project's Management Committee, which set targets for the Project and required annual monitoring to access subsequent years funding.
- 2.3.** The funding received from East Ayrshire Council allows the Project to employ a Project Coordinator for 20 hours per week, an administrative assistant for 10 hours per week and deliver courses and classes by employing sessional staff. In addition the Project supports adults returning to learning by offering crèche provision if required.
- 2.4.** At Policy and Resources Committee of 12 April 2005, it was agreed to develop a third Service Level Agreement with Bellsbank Women's and annual funding agreed with an inflationary uplift.

3. REPORT

- 3.1.** Specific objectives of the Project include the provision of:
 - A wide range of learning opportunities in the form of classes/courses and self help groups
 - Targeted provision to those women who are socially excluded, in particular women on low income and lone parents

- Provision of activities in the context of lifelong learning, addressing social exclusion to improve health, increase skills, raise confidence and increase community participation
- Breaking down barriers that may prevent members from participating through the provision of childcare, subsidies and transport

4. PERFORMANCE

- 4.1.** Bellsbank Women's Project was subject to an evaluation during January and February 2006 by the Department of Educational and Social Services Community Learning and Development Service.
- 4.2.** In 2005/2006, nearly 80 women participated in learning opportunities and over 60 were involved in self help groups. The learning opportunities delivered included sign language, confidence building, computing, keep fit, history and genealogy. The number of women participating in the learning opportunities fell slightly last year which can be explained by the Project Worker going on maternity leave and refurbishment work taking place in the wing. The Project Worker has now returned from maternity leave and working to strengthen and develop the programme.
- 4.3.** The crèche continues to provide support to parents/carers participating in learning opportunities and both the Crèche Coordinator and the Crèche Worker are undertaking the SVQ Level III Early Years Childcare Qualification.
- 4.4.** The project self evaluates on an ongoing basis through annual reports, course evaluations and the use of the HMle How Good is our Community Learning and Development evaluation framework. Monthly reports are presented to the Management Committee and the crèche is subject to Care Commission Inspections.
- 4.5.** The Men's Project which was funded through the Community Regeneration Fund ends on 31 March 2006. Support is being given to the Project to identify other sources of funding to develop aspects of the educational programme for men. At this time several funding applications are pending.

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1.** The evaluation process for the Project has provided evidence that the Project is clearly addressing its stated aims as well as the aims, values and priorities of the Council.
- 5.2.** In particular the Project is enabling women in the Bellsbank and surrounding areas to realise their potential through the provision of a range of learning opportunities and activities to break down barriers.
- 5.3.** It is recommended that the Project is supported in the implementation of the new HMle How Good is our Community Learning and Development

Evaluation Framework which will be launched next month. The use of this tool will be a condition of funding.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Nil

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The aims and objectives of the Project are compatible with the East Ayrshire's Community Plan.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 In 2005/2006 the project was awarded £22,363 which included an inflationary uplift.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members of the Policy and Resources Committee are asked to:

- (i) approve an annual award of £23,034 which includes an inflationary uplift; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

6 March 2006
DG/SR

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Service Level Agreement Annual Evaluation Report

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR